



MA CHADASH! מה חדש!

What's New! The newsletter of Temple Shalom Synagogue Center, Auburn, Maine ק"ק היכל שלום

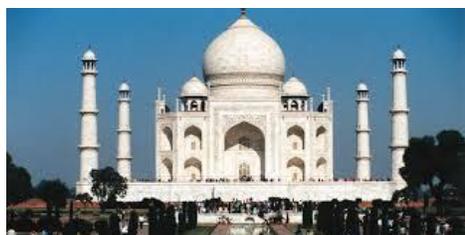
March 2026, Adar/Nisan 5786



Featuring Jeff Stern

Friday, March 6th, 7:00P.M.

(Musical Kabbalat Shabbat followed by Storytelling and Desserts)



**Brunch and Presentation
Sunday, March 15th, 10:00 A.M.**

**Brunch followed by a talk and slideshow by
Marianne Wise
About her three-week tour in India and Nepal**

**Parivash Rohani: Persecution in Iran
Friday, March 27th, 7:00P.M.
(Musical Kabbalat Shabbat followed by a multi-
media Presentation and Desserts)**



FROM THE RABBI



A few months after we moved up to Maine, I took the twins, who were then 5 years old, to a playground in New Auburn overlooking the river. While the kids were playing on the equipment I sat down next to an elderly Mainer on one of the benches. We began to talk. At some point I asked him if he was born and raised here. He said no. So, I asked him where was he born and raised. He said Lewiston. This was the most spectacularly un-Jewish conversation I ever had.

David Brooks, the conservative (and very Jewish) columnist for the New York Times, recently retired after 22 years. Thousands of people wrote the Times

asking him questions. Here is one question and his answer:

If you were 18 going into college (me right now) and feeling morally unsure about the state of the world, what would you do to try to make a difference? — Ali Ibanez, Tampa, Fla.

Your generation has inherited from mine a society in a state of social, emotional and spiritual crisis. If I were 18, I think I'd work really hard to try to learn the skills that would enable me to treat other people with consideration and respect in the concrete circumstances of life: How do you sit with someone who is depressed or grieving? How do you ask someone out, fall in love and, when necessary, break up with someone without crushing his or her heart? How do you become a great conversationalist? These are the skills that artificial intelligence will not replace, and they are the ones that will make you a good person who has a glowing influence on the people right around you.

This particular question and answer reminded me of a Mishna (an early Talmudic teaching) that we studied on a recent Thursday after minyan. The Mishna deals with the age-old question of why many righteous people suffer while many wicked people seem to thrive. The “answer” that this Mishna gives is to focus on valuing all people (literally: to eagerly greet every person) and, also, to keep yourself humble by surrounding yourself with people who are smarter, stronger and better than you.

I was struck by the similarity of the question posed to David Brooks, as well as his answer, to this Mishna. Both questions deal with enormous and existential crises of faith. And both “answers” focus on the importance of becoming a good and holy person. But the truth is neither David Brooks nor the Mishna actually answer the questions posed—because the questions are essentially unanswerable. Instead, both David Brooks and the Mishna offer a solution in place of an answer. Solutions that essentially ask the questioners to forget about their gigantic questions—which they can do virtually nothing about—and instead to focus on what they can change—themselves.

There are so many big and burning questions that we struggle with as we navigate a world that, as David Brooks put it, is in a state of social, emotional and spiritual crisis. Can we ever heal our divided nation? What about Israel? Antisemitism? How can we account for the ways in which supposedly religious people act in spectacularly unreligious ways? These questions (and many other similarly enormous questions) are frequently posed to me. By you. So, in the spirit of David Brooks and this Mishna, let's agree that these and all the other giant questions are essentially unanswerable. But in place of answers our tradition gives us an all-purpose solution to all of these big questions. And that solution is: Be a mensch!

Rabbi Sruli

FROM THE PRESIDENT



I'm writing this while on vacation with Jocelyn, Nick, Boden and Graham. There's something to be said about going back to the same place every year. It's an easy vacation. No real planning involved. It's a pleasant drive from our homes into the White Mountains. The condo at Attitash Mountain Village is large enough for everyone to have their space but cozy enough to sit by the fire and play board games with my grandsons. They know what trails they like best to ski down, and I know what stores to shop in North Conway. We also have our favorite restaurants which we haunt each year.

But there's also something to say about trying new things. My family is going to take one day and ski at a different resort, like Wildcat. An exciting adventure on a different terrain. I tried out a few new stores at Settlers Green to see what they had to offer. And we decided that each year we would go to a new restaurant. I'm looking forward to tonight's dinner at Red Fox Grille in Jackson.

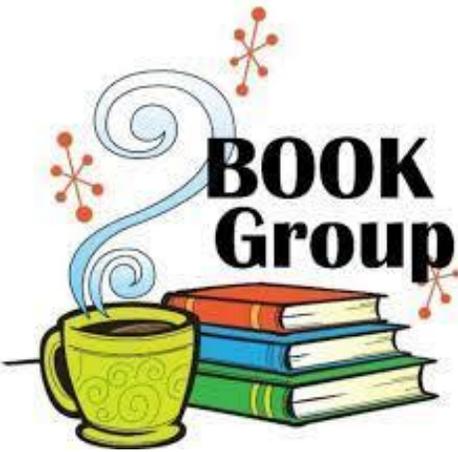
This week is really good for me to unwind, get away from day to day chores, and just relax (there's a hot tub in my bedroom here!) But I know it will be good to get home again too. I hope there's not too much snow for me to shovel. I miss my cat, Glitch.

Lesli Weiner
President



Shabbos at Shull!

!!BOOK GROUP NEWS!!



On February 9th Deb Katz, Marsha Auster, Heather Berube and I met and discussed “Hazel Says No” by Jessica Berger Gross. We debated whether the parents could have handled the situation differently through private investigation rather than public exposure. Being a new family in a small town in Maine, and the only Jews, certainly added to their trauma, the victim blaming and the public accusations. This turned out to be a much better book than any of us anticipated. A good read!

Our next book is “The Stolen Life of Collette Marceau” by Kristin Harmel. This historical drama sounds intriguing: “Colette Marceau has been stealing jewels for nearly as

long as she can remember, following the centuries-old code of honor instilled in her by her mother, Annabel: take only from the cruel and unkind, and give to those in need. Never was their family tradition more important than seven decades earlier, during the Second World War, when Annabel and Colette worked side by side in Paris to fund the French Resistance.

But one night in 1942, it all went wrong. Annabel was arrested by the Germans, and Colette’s four-year-old sister, Liliane, disappeared in the chaos of the raid, along with an exquisite diamond bracelet sewn into the hem of her nightgown for safekeeping. Soon after, Annabel was executed, and Liliane’s body was found floating in the Seine—but the bracelet was nowhere to be found.

Seventy years later, Colette—who has “redistributed” \$30 million in jewels over the decades to fund many worthy organizations—has done her best to put her tragic past behind her, but her life begins to unravel when the long-missing bracelet suddenly turns up in a museum exhibit in Boston. If Colette can discover where it has been all this time—and who owns it now—she may finally learn the truth about what happened to her sister. But she isn’t the only one for whom the bracelet holds answers, and when someone from her childhood lays claim to the diamonds, she’s forced to confront the ghosts of her past as never before. Against all odds, there may still be a chance to bring a murderer to justice—but first, Colette will have to summon the courage to open her own battered heart.”

We also chose our next 5 books:

- April 6.....“When the Angels Left the Old Country” by Sacha Lamb
- May 11.....“Heart of a Stranger” by Angela Buchdahl
- June 8.....“Gustav Sonata” by Rose Tremain
- July 13.....“Hostage” by Eli Sharabi
- August 15...“The Royal Librarian” by Daisy Wood

Our next meeting is MONDAY, MARCH 9 at 4PM on zoom. See you then.....lesli

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

Deena & Jack Weinstein

March 8



2026 Maine Jewish Film Festival Festival Preview this March at Bates College in Lewiston Pettengill Hall G52

Wednesday, March 11 7:00pm *Mazel Tov*
use code BATESCOMP)

Buy tickets [here](#). (If you have a Bates I.D.

Sunday, March 15 2:00 om *Las dos Mariette*
use code BATESCOMP)

Buy tickets [here](#). (If you have a Bates I.D.

Save the date!

The 2026 Maine Jewish Film Festival will be April 25-May 2.

For more information: www.mjff.org

Mazel Tov

Directed by Adrián Suar

Argentina, 2025

97 Minutes

When Dario Roitman returns from the U.S. to Argentina for a family wedding and Bat Mitzvah, he anticipates the usual family drama. But his carefully laid plans for a family reunion are suddenly upended when he learns, just hours before his flight, that his father has passed away. As the Roitmans gather for the funeral, old wounds resurface and longstanding tensions reach a boiling point. Despite the emotional turmoil, Dario remains determined to celebrate both the wedding and Bat Mitzvah, even if it means challenging tradition and risking further discord. Navigating grief, sibling rivalry, and delightfully eccentric grudges, the Roitmans reveal the messy yet enduring love of family.

Las dos Mariette

Directed by Poli Martinez Kaplun

Argentina, 2023

80 Minutes

A secret kept for 70 years, and a woman, Mariette, who dares to tell it. A film that follows the perspectives of four generations when what had been hidden finally comes to light. How long can a person keep a secret? The film's protagonist, Mariette, did it for 70 years. Now, at a threshold in her life, she finally decides to speak up. Afraid of betraying her mother, who did everything she could to keep the secret hidden, Mariette faces her world filled with doubt, fearing rejection and prejudice.

Film still from *Mazel Tov*.

Lisa DiFranza, Festival Coordinator
Maine Jewish Film Festival
PO Box 7465 Portland ME 04112
MJFFestivalcoordinator@gmail.com
207-653-9413



#15. Y So Curious? Is There an Aaron Gene?

By Labish Kurtz (Richard Kurtz)

“It shall be for him and for his descendants after him a covenant of eternal priesthood.”
— Numbers 25:13

Aaron, the brother of Moses and the first High Priest, lived about 3,300 years ago. As I mentioned in a previous column, every man inherits his Y chromosome directly from his father. That little piece of DNA is passed from father to son, generation after generation, almost like an unbroken thread through time.

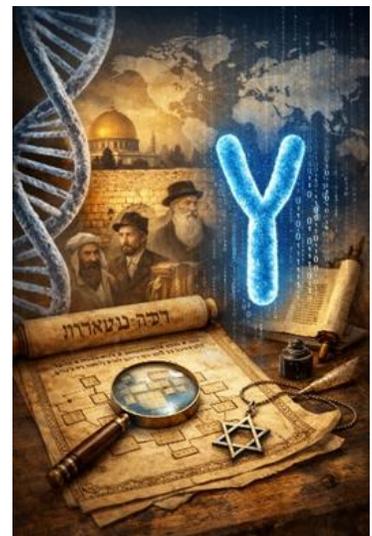
So here’s the fascinating question: if Aaron really was the first priest, the original *Kohen*, could today’s Jewish Kohanim share a Y-chromosomal signature that traces all the way back to him?

In 1997, a groundbreaking paper titled “*Y Chromosomes of Jewish Priests*” set out to explore exactly that. The researchers compared the Y chromosomes of three groups: Kohanim, non-Kohanim Jewish men, and non-Jewish men. What they found was striking, many of the Kohanim, both Ashkenazi and Sephardi, shared a common Y-chromosome pattern. Their conclusion? Many modern Kohanim may descend from a single paternal ancestor who lived roughly 2,000–3,000 years ago, right in the biblical ballpark for Aaron’s lifetime.

It was a big deal at the time. This was one of the first attempts to connect genetics directly with a biblical lineage. But as exciting as it sounded, it didn’t prove that the shared ancestor was Aaron himself, nor that all Kohanim came from one man. It also didn’t mean that Jewish identity could or should be defined by genetics.

Since then, more advanced studies have re-examined the question with far greater precision. The newer research paints a more complex picture. The idea of a single “Cohen gene” has largely faded. Instead, evidence points to multiple ancient priestly lineages, some possibly predating, or at least overlapping with, the era attributed to Aaron. The data still show that Kohanim are statistically more likely to share a paternal ancestry and that these lines have deep Eastern Mediterranean genetic roots.

In the end, the genetic record tells a story that feels very human. There’s continuity, yes, but also the mixing and movement you’d expect from thousands of years of history including migration, conversion, adoption, marriages, and all the threads of real life that weave into the fabric of any family line. So, while there may not be a single “Aaron gene,” there’s still something remarkable about how echoes of that ancient priestly heritage have survived in the DNA of today’s Kohanim.



Ma Chadash/What's New is published monthly by Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center. Temple Shalom is an independent congregation and a member of the Lewiston-Auburn Jewish Federation.

The mission of Temple Shalom, Synagogue-Center is to foster a strong Jewish identity and an active Jewish Community.

Rabbi Sruli Dresdner

Office Manager Julie Waite

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SPEEDY RECOVERY

We pray for refuah sh'leimah – the full and speedy recovery of **Valci Braga, Rachel Corvi, Lee Jay Feldman, Sara Graf, Robert Galumbeck, Ariella Green, Sharon Hemond, Alison Jaeger, Suzan Katzir, Michael Kendall, Linda Koskela, Henry Lefkowitz, Lee Leveille, Carolyn Marshal, Bruce Meyer, Alice Richman, Sandy Traister**, and all others who are not well at this time. *We like to hear good news! Whenever you request that a name be put on this list, please let Temple Shalom know when it can be removed.*



Rabbi Sruli is always happy to speak with and meet with members or our Temple. Please call or text his cell phone at 914-980-9509 if you would like to speak with him or to arrange a time for a meeting. You can also call or leave a message at the Temple office and Rabbi Sruli will get back to you.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

Ihara Dutra	March	3
Helene Fakhery		6
Marsha Auster		7
Julia Isaacson		11
Sophie Steinberg		13
Adam Allen		14
Jack Weinstein		16
Joseph Zidle		18
Able Kaplan		19
Joy Zidle		23
Charlie Dresdner		27
Johnny Dresdner		27
Kenneth Goodman		28
Cassandra Jensen		28



Yahrzeiten

Abe Tetenman	Mar.	1
Milton Faiman		2
Jules Asher		4
Rabbi David Berent		4
Carl Supovitz		4
Annette Hertz		5
Reba Koss		5
Joseph Zidle		5
Shirley Goodman		7
Harold Shapiro		7
Benjamin Abromson		9
Marilyn I. Smonds		10
Gladys Koss		10
Mattis Kurzbart		12
Nathan Day		13
Betty N. Cohen		14
Rose Nussinow		14
Carly Friedman		14
Viola Kaufman		15
Poppy Traister		15
Irvin Tayman		17
Lillian Kutzen		18
Arthur Silverman		18
Pearl Steinman		20
Lillian Zidle		20
Edward Koss		21
Harold Pearlman		21
Sheldon Nussinow		22
Gertrude Berent		25
Ida Perry		25
Allen Miller		26
Edward Reeves		27
Irving Isaacson		30
Robert E. Meyer		31



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The following made donations

In honor of Behzad Fakhery's
95th birthday

Jerryanne LaPerriere

Steven Hurwitz

Philip Laine

Bonnie & Larry Faiman

Candace & James Platz

Joy & Lewis Zidle

In memory of Betha Bodenheimer

The Bell Family

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Elcha Buckman

In memory of Michael Shain

In memory of Gary Buckman

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In memory of Lois Barr

Tom Reeves

In memory of Helene Reeves

Behzad & Harriet Fakhery

In thanks for the lovely service
& celebration

Estelle Rubinstein

In memory of Hyman Rubinstein

Mitch Ross

In memory of Meyer Ross

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In memory of Elinor & Arnold Goldblatt

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In memory of Michael Abromson

In honor of Behzad Fakhery's 95th birthday

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In appreciation

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Speedy recovery to Shelley Rau

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In honor of the birth of Zack & Eliana's new baby

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DATED MATERIAL

March, 2026

Community Passover Seder

Open only to Temple members and their families

Thursday, April 2 at 5:00 p.m.

*Adults: Members - \$25

*Children 12 & under: \$15

*Children under 5: No Charge

PAID reservations MUST be made by Wednesday, March 18th!

Clip and return with your check to:
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